THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowper.

Vol. VI. *Philadelphia, Saturday, July* 16, 1808. No. 3.

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

TRAVELS.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

(*Continued from page* 21.)

LETTER XXXI.

My dear E——,

THE death of the tyrant Robespiere arrested the operations of his admirers and followers in Geneva, and the revolutionary administration, which had so timely or rather so cheerfully submitted to the insurrection of the mountaineers, now resumed its functions, and still acting in imitation of the parent government, proceeded to punish some of the inferiour agents of the party, not as guilty of the crimes, which they really had committed, but as anarchists and as conspirators against the independence of the republick in conjunction with Soulavie, who had lately been recalled: but the object of Soulavie had rather been mischief and destruction than reunion; and Robespiere had taken credit for having respected the independence of Geneva, in opposition, perhaps, as much as from any other motive, to his rival Brissot: it was not until 1798 that the danger became imminent; for the Directory had expressed a wish to annex Geneva to their Republick, and the Resident who had succeeded Soulavie, entered with zeal into the project, and left nothing undone which could effect the execution of it. The trade of the city, which depended upon a free passage through the neighbouring territories of France, was burthened with difficulties and restrictions, and the utmost vigilance and severity were exercised to prevent the entry of provisions; even the navigation of the lake was obstructed by batteries and armed vessels, and Geneva was made to suffer in time of peace, and from a

friend and ally the most intolerable of those evils, which are ever inflicted in time of war upon an enemy: the Genevans would, it was expected, become in time tired of their own independence, and beg to be released from it, but neither threats nor inconveniencies, nor even promises of more splendid times could gain upon their patriotism; even the revolutionary magistrates, who though relieved from the despotism of the violent mountaineers, still governed more by clubs and illegal associations, than by law, were attached to the independence of the state, and that single merit seemed to make amends in the minds of their unhappy countrymen, for all the cruelty and injustice that had been perpetrated; they were like the uncle in the play, when he forgives all the faults and follies of a nephew, who had refused to sell *his* picture: and never surely had a people more reason to complain: to the revolutionary tribunal of ninety-four, had succeeded a commission of liquidation, which proceeded very deliberately to inquire into the circumstances of every individual, to scrutinize his political sentiments, and to levy a tax upon him in relation to both: of this the lower classes felt nothing; they were already reduced to penury by that idleness and those habits of dissipation which the revolutionary government had promoted and encouraged, and by the total stagnation of trade; the inhabitants of the subject-territory could not be made to understand how a revolution, from which such blessings had been promised, could occasion such a demand for money; the democrat could not be called upon for pecuniary sacrifices, after all the personal services he had rendered; the aristocrat, in short, the Genevan attached to the ancient order of things, who had done nothing for the revolution, was to pay for all, and that insult and mockery might be added to injustice, the publick were told in a proclamation, of the close connexion there was between poverty and liberty, and how essential it was to the existence of all free states, that there should be a perfect equality of condition—the demands of government were in many instances equal to thirty and forty per centum of the supposed capital of individuals, and a large portion of their property was to be sold at any price in order to raise it: numbers were ruined by this tyrannical exaction, others preferred leaving every thing at the mercy of these robbers, armed with the powers of law, and the city once so gay, so thickly inhabited, so much the seat of happiness, and so commercial, became in all the upper part of it, but a gloomy collection of empty houses, with here and there a solitary citizen plodding his way home along the grass-grown streets—his situation there was sad indeed: Trade and manufactories were now at an end, the funds of France paid no interest, or paid in assignats, and the general distress was increased by want in all the bitterness of humiliation: one respectable father of a family, whom I frequently see, has told me that he maintained his wife and children by copying; luckily for him he wrote a good hand, and there was always some plan of a constitution, some new law in agitation, which it was necessary to have a fair copy of before it could be printed: in another family, which I also know, and which had, for many years, lived in decent plenty,

the great object of their solicitude was to be provided, beforehand, with as many bushels of potatoes, for they aspired to no other food, as would last them through the winter. Such were the blessed effects of that revolutionary spirit which had been represented as likely to give rise to a better era in human affairs, and of which you must have heard a great many of your friends speak in terms of great admiration. Heaven grant that the dreadful lesson may have its proper effect, that we may be taught in time the danger of lodging power where there is no responsibility of property, and of letting loose the lower orders of society to prey at large and gratify every vitious passion at the expense of their fellow citizens. The body of the people seemed, during the gloomy interval of four years which succeeded the insurrection of ninety-four, to be, however, recovering from their insanity; those who had acted as leaders to the rest felt themselves called upon to explain to the world, in the best manner they could, the conduct they had pursued; and all, with at least a very small exception, remained attached to the independence of their country: but the revolutionary party, not taught experience by the evils which had overwhelmed France, nor by the scenes of misery and distress which they had witnessed at home, nor softened by the tacit agreement which the majority seemed desirous of entering into, to forgive and to forget all that was past, continued to interfere in an illegal and tumultuous manner with the administration of government, and affected to be distinguished by emblems upon their flag of reunion, and in the celebration of their festivals, which are too horrible for description: they proceeded to such lengths at last, they rendered themselves so odious and oppressive, that the Resident of France, who had been always anxious to find a pretext for annexing Geneva to the great Republick, assigned their conduct as a reason why the Directory should intervene and protect the good and ancient allies of France from such a scene of brutal ferocity, and such domestick tyranny: and yet this was the very party, these were the very men, whom this very Resident had presented to General Buonaparte on his passage through Geneva but six months before, as the steady friends of liberty and social order! But it was necessary, it seems, if he meant to keep his employment, that he should promote the views of the Directory, who had lately expressed their desire of a union, as they were pleased to call it, with Geneva, and who were known to pursue their purposes, upon all occasions, with unrelenting perseverance: they had forgotten, or perhaps they were ignorant of the language held the year before by the Resident Resnier, when he presented the standard of France to the administrative council of Geneva; it was a solemn pledge, he said, which the great nation now gave of their friendship to the sister Republick, whose freedom and prosperity they would always cherish and protect. The Resident Adet, who preceded Resnier, had expressed himself to the same purpose—"France, he said, whose liberty is now established upon a basis never to be shaken, can never cease to love and to respect the liberty of others; far from seeing their independence insulted, each weaker state would find in France its best

defender." The utmost, however, which the general council, now open to nearly all who chose to be of it, could be brought to consent to, was, that a committee should be appointed to devise such measures as might best contribute to strengthen the bond of union with France: they were willing indeed under the specious name of a closer connexion to make every sacrifice but that of their political independence; they offered to place their means of defence and of subsistence, and the regulation of their custom-house in the hands of French agents, provided that what little would then remain of independence could be respected, and with that view the committee addressed the resident in terms of the most pathetick eloquence: But the savage, unprincipled ravisher was not to be so moved—Geneva, though disgraced by internal faction, though disarmed, depressed, impoverished, and almost depopulated, was a victim not unworthy the voracity of his masters: a corps of troops had been kept in readiness for that purpose, and on the 16th of April, 1798, while the sovereign council was in session, and about to decide on the powers of the committee, a party of Hussars entered at the same moment each of the three gates, disarmed the guards, paraded in military form through the city, and established themselves as in time of war: all that could now be done was to procure a sort of capitulation, in which the expiring republick stipulated for a few advantages, the principal of which was that the Genevans should retain the direction of those funds, that had been appropriated by their ancestors to the encouragement of learning, and the maintenance of the poor; thus expiating in some degree the crimes and irregularities of the last six years, by this final exercise of their independence in behalf of charity and of science. France was now meanly possessed "of a mere lifeless violated form," but the world was told, that the directory had listened to the solicitations of the Genevans, and received them into the bosom of the great republick. "Citizen directors," says the resident in his official communication to the French government, "all is joy and happiness in Geneva—a solemn deputation from —— —— —— —— ——I will not degrade myself so far as to enter into particulars: your publick functions will cease tomorrow, and the sovereign council of the state, announced to me their wish of being united to France, and I have in your name accepted their offer, and confirmed forever the happiness of the Genevan people. The true patriot was not to be awed by the vociferation of a few wretches in the pay of England, nor alarmed at their poinards, and the wish of a very large majority of the citizens, solemnly convened for that purpose in all the forms of law, and expressed in terms the most affectionate, has induced me to order a small body of troops to enter the city—no words can express the general joy; every corner of Geneva resounds with patriotick songs, and the only contest is, who shall best receive their brave defenders:" On the very day of this gross violation of truth, the resident had addressed an insulting message to the government of Geneva, now in the last hours of its existence; the syndick and council had expressed themselves like men, who knew their deplorable situation, but like the magistrates

of a people once free; "Your note" says the resident," does not surprise me, it is consistent with your general conduct, and with those principles which rendered the interference of France necessary: it is of very little consequence to France and to your fellow-citizens, by what publick act it may please you to terminate them."

—

LETTER XXXII.

In the account which Dalrymple gives of the siege of Limerick, you may remember how much was effected by the enthusiasm of a few spirited young men, who raised the drawbridge in the face of an advanced corps of king James's army, and encouraged their townsmen to a desperate and successful resistance: I have often wished, that some such generous youths had existed in Geneva, on the 16th of April, and that the drawbridge had been raised: the directory appear to have been at that moment rather desirous of acquiring a character for moderation. They had lately expressed themselves, at the reception of the agent from the government of Tuscany, as being to be hereafter swayed by no principles but those of general good will under the guidance of the strictest impartiality and uprightness; they might have refrained from inflicting the horrours of a siege or an assault upon an unoffending city, they might have been ashamed of entering upon a quarrel, so like that which the wolf forces upon the lamb, in one of Æsop's fables, and might have respected the last struggles of patriotism in their unhappy neighbour. It is idle however to reason upon what might have been the consequences of another course of events, or to consider the transactions of past times any otherwise than as facts, from which we may derive experience for the government of our own affairs. I have mentioned in a former letter, the effect which the union with France appeared to have upon the manners and customs of Geneva, and it is right that I should now give you some idea of the consequences which that event has been attended with in matters of manufactory and commerce, and I do so with the more pleasure, as I have much better authority to go upon than my own observation. Previously to the year 1792, the money held by citizens of Geneva in the funds of France, amounted to at least———. Of this upwards of two thirds have been sunk by the partial bankruptcy of the French republick during the revolution, to the distress and indeed ruin of numbers, who not satisfied with the disposing of their own original fortunes in that manner, had borrowed largely for the purpose: The remaining third, brings an interest of five per cent. but sells if the holder choses to draw his money out of the funds at the loss of forty per cent.; so that a capital of a hundred pounds, before the revolution, brings in but one pound, thirteen shillings and five pence of yearly interest, and sells for less than twenty pounds. As the money so lost, however, consisted in general of what had been formerly saved, the consequences would not have been irretrievable, had not the means of subsequent accumulations been destroyed by the union: seated as it were upon an island amidst surrounding nations, Geneva carried on its commerce formerly with all the advantages of uninterrupted neutrality: the raw materials for different manufactories

were imported free of duty, spices and every article of grocery were brought in, from the East and West-Indies, and the city was like an immense and well-assorted warehouse, from which the people of the neighbouring country to the distance of nearly two hundred miles in every direction, were supplied on easy terms: six thousand persons, and many of them women, were employed in the various branches of watch-making to the yearly value in exportation of three hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds, and fifteen hundred workmen found constant employ in the manufactory of calicoes and printed linens: there were some other manufactories of less importance, and the business of printing was carried on to great extent, while a bank, established for the special purpose, facilitated the payment of all labourers and journeymen: the poor, meantime, were amply provided for, not only from the funds of the hospital, but from the very liberal and regular donations of private families, making altogether a sum not inferiour to the revenue of the state, which was about twenty-five thousand pounds a year. The act which rendered Geneva French put an end, as you may suppose, to the greater part of its commercial advantages; the admission of every raw material or other article of foreign produce, became subject to the duties of a French custom-house, and all such were prohibited as there was the slightest prospect of procuring from any part of France: in addition to the very natural, though in some instances ill-judged desire of promoting their native manufactories, the government of France seems blinded by the headlong passion of injuring England: Every article from that country, even such as long use had rendered necessary, and as cannot be supplied elsewhere, are strictly prohibited; an army of custom-house officers are seen prowling about the environs, or basking in the sun at the gates of the town, and a whole nation of smugglers has been called into existence. The commerce of Geneva is now sunk to nearly nothing, the fifteen hundred workmen at the calico manufactory are diminished to less than a third; the numbers of those employed in the various branches of watch-making are still more diminished, and the trade in East and West-India articles is confined to the consumption of the city. The spirit of charity is as fervent as ever, but the administrators of the hospital are every year obliged to encroach upon their capital, and the probability is, that the means of relief will decrease as rapidly as the number of the poor increases. The only class which appears to flourish is that of the smugglers, whose industry stimulated by twenty-five per cent. keeps the city perfectly well supplied with cloths and velverets of English manufacture, which being better, and wonderful to tell, cheaper than can be furnished in France, are openly exposed to sale, and very generally worn: this is in great measure the case wherever I have been; the only effect therefore of these prohibitory regulations with respect to English manufactories is, to render them of somewhat less common use, and infinitely more expensive, and this is effected by employing above seventy thousand chosen men in a way destructive of military discipline, by corrupting the morals of the frontier inhabitants along a space of perhaps three thousand English miles, and by affording ille-

gal employment to numbers, whose talents and whose activity might have rendered them useful members of society. Could the government adopt the wisdom of Canut the great, when seated amid his courtiers on the brink of the ocean, and acknowledge that there are occasions, in which empire is not to be attempted; would they reflect upon the enormous sacrifice of fifty and sometimes of fifty-two per cent. which is made on the receipts of the custom, in their present mode of collection; would they be satisfied with a duty of eight or ten per cent. on English goods, and employ no more officers and others than such a system required, I am persuaded that independently of every other advantage, there would result an increase of revenue equal to the maintenance and equipment of a large army or a powerful fleet, or to some other great national purpose of general utility.

For The Port Folio.

POLITE LITERATURE.

There is a certain mark of national relation that is obvious enough, and yet as far as I know but seldom taken notice of. The successive application of names, though a matter of no great moment, to the inquisitive mind may become a useful hint, or perhaps an amusive speculation. It is probable that my remarks will labour under no small share of imperfection, but either a conviction of some real value in them, or a sort of parental partiality, has disposed me to let them answer for themselves to the intelligent reader as well as they can.

It may previously be observed that nations commence very differently; that while one appears to spring from its own root, another may be considered as a slip taken from the branches of its parent tree, to find itself a root wherever Divine Providence may be pleased to plant it. That the former will have a language, as well as arts of their own invention, while the latter are content to make use of the inventions of their ancestors, to which they have already in their individual capacity been accustomed. That though the latter find themselves immediately in possession of the arts and habits of civil society, yet their political existence as truly commences at the time of their emigration, as if they had just emerged from a state of nature.

Hence it will be easy to observe the comparative longevity of nations; for laws, customs, and arts, which commonly bear the stamp of their inventers, naturally mark the precedence of such inventers in relation to any others who may be found in possession of them, unless they were imposed by the former as conquerors.

As to the subject of this essay, proper names are either peculiar to some nation, or common to several nations; to some one of which however they are ultimately referable. There are various affinities that lead to a determination of this sort. Not only the language whereby we are enabled to make out a rational etymology of proper names of the same origin with itself, but the very form of the word, which often preserves its native character under all the disguise of successive modifications; the arts which may have flourished in such a nation, frequently influencing the denomination of individuals; or perhaps their very genius or ruling passion, will not allow us to look any further for the origin of names, with which it is so remarkably in unison.

For example—if it were proved that the Gauls made use of German names, and at the same time that those names appeared to be German by all the evidence that the case admitted of, we had no intimation of any event that could have introduced

them as an innovation, the relation of elder and younger would immediately present itself, and we should consider the latter as beholden to the former for their modes of business and pleasure, and perhaps for their laws and scheme of government; as the Romans imported the twelve tables from Greece.

Thus then when two nations have from time immemorial continued at peace with each other, or at least without any war terminating in conquest, and the proper names generally in use are common to both, with this difference, that by comparing them with their languages respectively they appear to be natural to one and ascititious to the other, we immediately assign a subsequent origin to the latter, as the reason of such difference. The names that we use in America are generally English, and appear to have originated with the English language; and until it appears that these names were imposed upon us by conquest, or that in consequence of some grand revolution they were adopted, to the exclusion of those which sprung up with us, and were coeval with our language, supposing we had a language our own, we unavoidably conclude from such use of English names, that we are a younger nation than the English.

But this is not the only light in which the communication of names may be viewed. In some cases it does not so much discover the difference of age as the difference of power. The Greeks were older than the Romans, and were able to furnish them with laws and philosophy, but being inferiour in national strength, very few of their names had the honour of being transferred to an Italian subject: They were sometimes indeed given to servants, and persons of mean profession, as Chloe or Briseis to girls, and Epictetus, Dionysius or Phædrus, to men servants, as we have Pompeys and Cæsars among the negroes; but we find no Pericles or Demosthenes among their statesmen, nor do we find any Leonidases or Epaminondases among their generals.

There are two reasons why one nation becoming superiour to another in war transfuses its names and titles into the subjugated party. The government is put into the hands of such persons as the conqueror can most safely confide in, who are undoubtedly his own countrymen. They are attended by their families and a train of inferiour officers. These bring their vernacular tongue with them; and at least familiarize their names to the natives. Thus for a long time after the conquest of Asia, by Alexander the Great, the most of those to whom history attributes any importance in that extensive country, are called by Greek names; and in Carthage and its dependencies, after it was overpowered by the Romans, the Maximians, the Crispins, and the Cæcilians, occur as frequently as if Campania itself had been translated into Africa.

A second reason is, that the natives not only become reconciled to their conquerors, but in process of time seem proud to lose their original character in the more prevailing reputation of the reigning party, and consequently seek to favour the fortunes of their posterity by naming them after distinguished individuals of that party; as in England, after the Norman conquest had become well settled, a descendant of Saxon or British ancestors would have been not at all displeased at being transplanted into the genealogy of one of William's barons.

There are very few nations but what exemplify these observations. Even the Romans, who for a long time were invincible, and during that time were proudly tenacious of Roman names, at length were fain to receive even the terms of their existence from Barbarians, and in consequence of such subjection, adopted names that would have equally offended their pride and grated their ears in better times. Who would think that such names as Ructulf, Agilulf, Grimoald and Luit-

prand, could ever have become tolerable to a nation, who, in imitation of the Greeks, had made their language the test of civilization, and insulted those who were unintelligible to them with the appellation of Barbarians. But those names were naturalized in Italy, and however their asperities may have been worked down by a pronunciation characteristically soft and musical, they are still terrible to the eye, and emphatically tell the savage origin of the modern Romans.

In reading the history of Asia and Egypt, from the time that Macedonian valour exerted itself with such vast advantage in the affairs of the world, till it was absorbed in the empire of Rome, we are sufficiently informed of its prevalence by the circumstance of names. As by observing the name of a remarkable person disseminated in a neighbourhood, we know that the people of such neighbourhood, are either descendants of that person, or that by some considerable benefaction they have been disposed to keep his name alive; so when we observe the annals of Alexandria, of Babylon and Antioch, thickly sown with Grecian names, we pause with heedful reverence, as o'er the vestiges of genius and magnanimity, and pay the willing tribute of our admiration to a people, who could leave so advantageous an impression of themselves upon the greatest part of the civilized world.

Greek names are so much of the Greek language; and therefore to those who read Greek, represent general ideas as well as the individuals to whom they were appropriated; and, though perhaps I shall be thought fanciful, that circumstance alone has sometimes relieved the obscurity of a page over-charged with those hard-featured words, like clouds, which make some amends for shutting out the beams of the sun by shedding a little light of their own. Moreover if every word were obliterated but those names, although the narrative would be lost, there would still be signification, and no mean signification neither, as it would present us with ideas familiar only to generous minds, and give us honourable notions of human nature.

It is no strange thing that a nation should, in the first instance, make use of significant names. I believe they universally do so. But it is wonderful that those names should continue intelligible for three thousand years, as among the Greeks, while no torture of criticism could discover a particle of meaning in most of the surnames of nations with whose commencement we are much better acquainted. At least it proves the antiquity and permanency of the Greek language, forming itself into an intellectual habit equally convenient at the Trojan war and in the nineteenth century of the Christian era: and from the same circumstance, the Hebrew makes a still more venerable figure, for their proper names, with a very few exceptions, are compounded of words of common use in their language; and as the custom of applying significant or characteristick names seldom occurs but in the earlier annals of any nation, and the patriarchal names are evidently of this sort, we have the pleasure of thinking that the very Hebrew we now read, was spoken by Abraham, and perhaps by Adam in Paradise.

There was an instance in England of the adoption of characteristick names somewhat out of season, according to our doctrine; but it must be remembered that things were then much out of their common course, and that the men who called themselves Kill-sin and Faint-not, and the like, fancied themselves to be making all things new, and bringing about a revolution, in comparison with which, any other event of the political world would be not worth mentioning; so that we recognize the same reason for the practice, namely, the spirit of enterprize natural to a rising state; and, from the complexion of those names, with equal certainty infer the state of the

times; for what could better designate the reign of fanaticism?

I have no doubt that some future age will observe a certain fanciful innovation of the eighteenth century, whereby the ladies, instead of the uncouth names of their grandmothers, have designated themselves by the enchanting sounds of Leonora, Evelina, and it will be acknowledged that they have manifested some taste by such a choice: but the wonder will be, whence they got them; until some dealer in literary curiosities informs them that there were *then* a sort of books that they called novels, that he had actually seen one himself that had some how survived the injuries of time; that those books depended very much upon such names for something that the ladies were very fond of, called sentiment; in short that they became sentimental themselves (whatever that may mean) and that it was very natural for them to identify themselves, in name, with characters that they had assimilated themselves to in idea.

I shall mention one more instance of the indirect importance of names, which, as a Christian, I must be allowed to exult in. It is hardly necessary to say, that whatever illustrates the truth and validity of the Bible, makes some addition to my happiness. But however that may be, there are no persons or institutions, that have been recognized in this manner so extensively as those of holy writ. In what civilized country can we make acquaintance without meeting with John, Thomas, Abraham, Joseph? The name of the first man, as called in our scriptures, was known to the East-Indians before their communications with the Europeans. There must have been a vast impetus in those names, or rather in the characters that invested them, to have defied oblivion, and propagated themselves so far beyond the memory of every thing else; and this I attribute (though philosophy should smile at my credulity) to the divinity of that revelation in which they were concerned. M. L.

From the New-York EVENING POST.

Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.

We republish the following letter on white-washing, as much with the view of restoring it to its rightful owner, the late Francis Hopkinson, Esq. of Philadelphia, as from a desire to treat our readers with a piece of such genuine humour. Strange as it may seem, although it was printed in Hopkinson's Works several years ago, it has now been going the round of our newspapers, and credit given for it to the *Northumberland Gazette*, published we believe somewhere in the state of Pennsylvania. Justice forbids us to permit that a piece of so much merit should be stolen, and the fraud pass unnoticed; a fraud the more contemptible as the person guilty of it has resorted to the pitiful trick of occasionally altering a word or two in a sentence, in the hope of thus escaping detection, *à la manière de Bristed.*

A Letter from a gentleman in America to his friend in Europe.

ON WHITE-WASHING.

When a young couple are about to enter on the matrimonial state, a never-failing article in the marriage-treaty is, that the lady shall have and enjoy the free and unmolested exercise of the rights of *White-washing*, with all its ceremonials, privileges, and appurtenances. You will wonder what this privilege of white-washing is. I will endeavour to give you some idea of the ceremony as I have seen it performed.

There is no season in the year in which the lady of the house may not claim the privilege of white-washing, but the last of May is most generally fixed upon for the purpose. The attentive husband may judge by certain prognosticks when the storm is near at hand. When the lady is unusually fretful, finds fault with the servants, is discontented with the children, and complains much of the filthiness of everything about her, these are signs which ought not to be neglected; yet these are not decisive, as they sometimes occur and go off again, without producing any further effect. But if when the husband rises in the morning, he should observe in the yard a wheelbarrow with a quantity of lime in it, or cer

tain buckets with lime dissolved in them, there is then no time to be lost; he immediately locks up the apartment or closet where his papers or private property are kept, and putting the key in his pocket betakes himself to flight. For a husband, however beloved, becomes a perfect nuisance during this season of female rage; his authority is superseded, his commission is suspended, and the very scullion who cleans the brasses in the kitchen becomes of more consideration and importance than he. He has nothing for it but to abdicate and run from an evil which he can neither prevent nor mollify.

The husband gone the ceremony begins. The walls are in a few minutes stripped of their furniture; paintings, prints, and looking-glasses lie in huddled heaps about the floors, the curtains are torn from their testers, the beds crammed into windows; chairs and tables, bedsteads and cradles crowd the yard, and the garden fence bends beneath the weight of carpets, blankets, and cloaks, old coats and ragged breeches. Here may be seen the lumber of the kitchen forming a dark and confused mass for the foreground of the picture; gridirons, frying-pans, rusty shovels, and broken tongs, spits, and pots, joint-stools, and the fractured remains of rush-bottomed chairs. There a closet has disgorged its bowels; riveted plates and dishes, halves of china bowls, cracked tumblers, broken wine-glasses, phials of forgotten physick, papers of unknown powders, seeds, and dried herbs, handfuls of old corks, tops of old teapots, and the stoppers of departed decanters, from rag hole in the garret, to the rat hole in the cellar, no place escapes unrummaged. It would seem as if the day of general doom was come, and the utensils of the house were dragged forth to judgment. In this tempest the words of King Lear naturally present themselves, and might, with little alteration, be made strictly applicable:

——"Let the great gods
That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipt of Justice!——"
"——Close pent up guilt,
Rive your concealing continents, and ask
These dreadful summoners grace."

This ceremony completed, and the house thoroughly evacuated, the next operation is, to smear the walls and cieling with brushes dipped in a solution of lime, called white-wash; to pour buckets of water on every floor, and scratch all the partitions and wainscots with hard brushes charged wi h soap-suds, and dipped in stonecutters' sand. The windows by no means escape the general deluge. A servant scrambles out upon the pent-house, at the risk of her neck, and with a mug in her hand, and a bucket within reach, she dashes away innumerable gallons of water against the glass panes, to the great annoyance of the passengers in the street.

I have been told that an action at law was once brought against one of those water nymphs, by a person who had a new suit of clothes spoiled by this operation; but after a long argument, it was determined by the whole court that the action would not lie; inasmuch as the defendant was in the exercise of a legal right, and not answerable for the consequences; and so the poor gentleman was doubly non-suited—for he not only lost his suit of clothes, but a suit at law.

[Here the Northumberland Gazette thought fit to break off: the authour, however, continues his subject with equal felicity, as follows:]

These smearings and scratchings, these washings and dashings being duly performed, the next ceremony is to cleanse and replace the distracted furniture. You may have seen a house raising or a ship lanch—recollect if you can the hurry, bustle, confusion, and noise of such a scene, and you will have some idea of this cleansing match. The misfortune is, that the sole object is to make

things *clean*. It matters not how many useful, ornamental or valuable articles suffer death under the operation. A mahogany chair and a carved frame undergo the same discipline: they are to be made *clean* at all events; but their preservation is not worthy attention. For instance: a fine large engraving is laid flat upon the floor; a number of smaller prints are piled upon it, until the superincumbent weight cracks the lower glass; but this is of no importance. A valuable picture is placed leaning against the sharp corner of a table; others are made to lean against that, till the pressure of the whole forces the corner of the table through the canvas of the first.

The frame and glass of a fine print are to be cleaned, the spirit and oil used on this occasion, are suffered to leak through and before the engraving—no matter! If the glass is clean and the frame shines it is sufficient; the rest is not worthy of consideration. An able arithmetician hath made a calculation, founded on long experience, and proved that the losses and destruction incident to two white-washings are equal to one removal, and three removals equal to one fire.

This cleansing frolick over, matters begin so resume their pristine appearance: the storm abates and all would be well again: but it is impossible that so great a convulsion in so small a community should pass over without producing some consequences. For two or three weeks after the operation, the family are usually afflicted with sore eyes, sore throats, or severe colds, occasioned by exhalations from wet floors and damp walls.

I know a gentleman here who is fond of accounting for every thing in a philosophical way. He considers this, which I call a custom, as a real, periodical disease, peculiar to the climate. His train of reasoning is whimsical and ingenious, but I am not at leisure to give you the detail. The result was that he found the distemper to be incurable; but after much study he thought he had discovered a method to divert the evil he could not subdue. For this purpose, he caused a small building about twelve feet square to be erected in his garden, and furnished with some ordinary chairs and tables, and a few prints of the cheapest sort. His hope was that when the white-washing frenzy seized the females of his family, they might repair to this apartment, and scrub and scour and sweat to their hearts' content; and so spend the violence of this disease in this outpost, while he enjoyed himself in quiet at head-quarters. But the experiment did not answer his expectation. It was impossible it should since a principal part of the gratification consists in the lady's having an uncontrolled right to torment her husband, at least once in every year, to turn him out of doors and take the reins of government into her own hands.

There is a much better contrivance than this of the philosopher; which is to cover the walls of the house with paper. This is generally done. And though it does not abolish, it at least shortens the period of female dominion. This paper is decorated with various fancies, and made so ornamental that the women have admitted the fashion without perceiving the design.

There is also another alleviation of the husband's distress. He generally has the sole use of a small room for his books and papers, the key of which he is allowed to keep. This is considered as a privileged place, even in the white-washing season, and stands like the land of *Goshen* amid the plagues of *Egypt*. But then he must be extremely cautious, and ever upon his guard; for should he inadvertently go abroad and leave the key in his door, the house-maid, who is always on the watch for such an opportunity, immediately enters in triumph with buckets, brooms and brushes——takes possession of the premises, and forthwith puts all his books and papers *to rights*, to his ut-

ter confusion, and sometimes serious detriment. I can give you an instance:

A gentleman was sued at law by the executors of a mechanick, on a charge found against him in the deceased's books to the amount of thirty pounds. The defendant was strongly impressed with a belief that he had discharged the debt and taken a receipt: but as the transaction was of long standing, he knew not where to find the receipt. The suit went on in course, and the time approached when judgment should be obtained against him. He then sat down seriously to examine a large bundle of old papers, which he had untied and displayed on a table for the purpose. In the midst of his search he was suddenly called away on business of importance. He forgot to lock the door of his room. The house-maid who had been long looking for such an opportunity, immediately entered with the usual implements, and with great alacrity fell to cleaning the room and *putting things to rights*. One of the first objects that struck her eye was the confused situation of the papers on the table. These, without delay, she huddled together, like so many dirty knives and forks; but in the action a small piece of paper fell unnoticed on the floor, which happened to be the very receipt in question. As it had no very respectable appearance it was soon after swept out with the common dirt of the room and carried in a dust pan into the yard. The tradesman had forgot to enter the credit in his book. The defendant could find nothing to obviate the charge and so judgment went against him for debt and costs. A fortnight after the whole was settled, and the money paid, one of the children found the receipt among the dirt in the yard.

It must be allowed that the ablutions I have mentioned are attended with no small inconveniencies; yet the women would not be induced by any consideration to resign their privilege.

Notwithstanding this singularity I can give you the strongest assurances that the women of America make the most faithful wives and the most attentive mothers in the world. And I dont doubt, but you will join me in opinion, that if a married man is made miserable only for one week in a whole year, he will have no great cause to complain of the matrimonial bond.

This letter has run on to a length I did not expect; I therefore hasten to assure you that I am as ever,

Yours, &c. &c. &c.

To the Editor of the Columbian Magazine

SIR,

I have seen a piece in the Pennsylvania Packet, and republished in Mr. Carey's Museum, upon the custom of *White-Washing*, in which that necessary duty of a good housewife is treated with unmerited ridicule. I should have forgot the foolish thing, but the season approaching, which most women think suitable for cleansing their apartments of the smoke and dirt of the Winter, I hear this saucy authour dished up in every family, and his flippant performance quoted whenever a wife attempts to exercise her reasonable prerogative or execute the duties of the station.

Women generally employ their time to better purpose than scribbling. The care and comforts of a family rest principally on their shoulders: hence it is that there are but few female authours; and the men, knowing how necessary our attentions are to their happinees, take every opportunity of discouraging literary accomplishments in the fair sex. We hear it echoed from every quarter—"My wife cannot make verses, it is true, but she makes an excellent pudding—She cant correct the press, but she can correct her children,

and scold her servants with admirable discretion—she cant unravel the intricacies of political economy and federal government, but she can knit charming stockings." And this they call praising a wife, and doing justice to her good character.

I say women generally employ their time to better purpose than in scribbling; otherwise this facetious writer had not escaped so long unanswered. We have ladies, who sometimes lay down the needle and take up the pen: I wonder none of them have attempted some reply. For my part, I do not pretend to be an authour: I never appeared in print in my life, but I can no longer forbear saying something in answer to such impertinence.

Only consider, Mr. Editor, our situation. Men are naturally inattentive to the decencies of life; but why should I be so complaisant? I say they are naturally nasty beasts. If it were not that their connexion with the refined sex polished their manners, and had a happy influence on the general economy of life, these lords of the creation would wallow in filth, and populous cities would infect the atmosphere with their noxious vapours. It is the attention and assiduity of the women that prevent men from degenerating into swine.

How important, then, are the services we render! And, yet for these very services we are made the subject of ridicule and fun—base ingratitude!—nauseous creature! Perhaps you may think I am in a passion—no, Mr. Editor, I do assure you, I was never more composed in my life; and yet it is enough to provoke a saint, to see how unreasonably we are treated by the men—Why, now, there's my husband, a good enough sort of a man in the main, but I will give you a small sample of him: He comes into the parlour, the other day, where, to be sure, I was cutting up a piece of linen. "Lord, says he, what a clutter here is—I cannot bear to see the parlour look like a tailor's shop—besides, I am going to make some important philosophical experiments, and must have sufficient room." You must know my husband is one of your would-be philosophers. Well—I bundled up my linen as quick as I could, and began to darn a pair of ruffles, which took up no room, and could give no offence. I was determined, however, to watch my lord and master's important business. In about half an hour, the tables were covered with all manner of trumpery—bottles of water, phials of drugs, pasteboard, paper and cords, glue, paste, and gum-arabick, files, knives, scissors and needles, rosin, wax, silk, thread, rags, jags, tags, books, pamphlets, and manuscripts. Lord bless me! I am almost out of breath, and yet I have not enumerated half the articles. Well, to work he went, and although I did not understand the object of his manoeuvres, yet I could sufficiently discover that he did not succeed in any one operation: I was glad of that—yes, I confess, I was glad of that, and good reason too. After he had fatigued himself with mischief, like a monkey in a china shop, and had called the servants to clean every thing away, I took a view of the scene before me. I shall not even attempt a minute description—suffice it to say, that he had overset his inkstand, and stained my best mahogany table with ink; he had spilt a quantity of vitriol upon my carpet, and burned a hole in it; my marble hearth was all over spotted with

melted rosin; he had broken three china cups, two wine glasses, a tumbler, and one of my best decanters; and after all, as I said before, I perceived that he had not succeeded in any one operation. By-the-by—tell your friend, the white-wash scribbler, that this is one way by which our closets become furnished with "halves of china bowls, cracked tumblers, broken wine glasses, tops of teapots, and stoppers of departed decanters." I say, I took a sober view of the dirt and devastation my philosophical husband had made; and there I sat, *like Patience on a monument smiling at Grief;* but it worked inwardly—yes, Mr. Editor, it worked inwardly, I would almost as lieve the melted rosin had been in his throat, and the vitriol upon his skin, as on my dear marble hearth and my carpet. It is not true that women have no command over their own feelings; for notwithstanding this gross provocation I said nothing, or next to nothing; I only observed, very pleasantly, that a lady of my acquaintance had told me, that the reason why philosophers are called *literary* men, is because they frequently make a great *litter*—not a word more. However, the servant cleared away, and down sat the disappointed philosopher. A friend dropt in soon after—"Your servant, sir,—how do you do?" "Oh Lord, I am almost fatigued to death—I have been all the morning making philosophical experiments." I was now more hardly put to it to smother a laugh, than I had been just before to contain my resentment. My *Precious* went out soon after with his friend, and I, as you may well suppose, immediately mustered all my forces—brushes, buckets, soap, sand, lime-skins, and cocoa-nut shells—all the powers of housewifery were employed. I was certainly the best philosopher of the two, for my experiments succeeded, and his did not: all was well again, except my broken ware and my carpet, my poor vitriolized carpet, which still remains a mournful memento of philosophick fury; or rather of philosophick folly.

This operation was scarce over, when in came my *experimental dear*, and told me, with all the indifference in the world, that he had invited six gentlemen to dine with him at three o'clock—it was then past one; I complained of the short notice: Poh! Poh! says he you can get a leg of mutton and a loin of veal, and a few potatoes, and it will do well enough. Heavens! what a chaos must the head of a philosopher be! a leg of mutton, a loin of veal, and potatoes! I was at a loss whether I should laugh or be angry. But there was no time for determining; I had but an hour and a half to do a world of business in. My carpet, which had suffered in the cause of experimental philosophy in the morning, was destined to be shamefully dishonoured in the afternoon by a deluge of filthy tobacco juice; gentlemen smokers and chewers love çigarrs and pigtail better than carpets.

Think, Mr. Editor, what a woman must endure under such circumstances; and then, after all, to be reproached with her cleanliness, and to have her white-washings, her scowerings, and scrubbings made the subject of publick ridicule, is more than patience can put up with.

What I have now exhibited is but a small specimen of the injuries we suffer under the boasted superiority of the men. But we will not be laughed out of our

cleanliness. A woman would rather be called —— than *slut;* as a man would rather be called a *knave* than *fool.*

I had a great deal more to say, but I am called away. We are just preparing to white-wash; yes, I say to white-wash; the brushes are ready, the buckets are paraded, my husband is gone off, so much the better. When one is about a thorough cleaning, the first dirty thing to be removed is one's husband—I am called for again—adieu!

Yours,

NITIDIA.

For The Port Folio.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

Written during the warm weather in Feb. 1806.

What joyous notes are these, so soft so sweet,
That unexpected strike my charmed ear!
It is the robin's song. This genial morn
Deceives the feathered tribe. For yet the sun
In Pisces holds his course; but though oblique,
So mild and warm descend his pleasant rays,
They think the tedious winter gone: no dread
Of change retards their wing, but off they soar,
Triumphing in the fancied dawn of spring.
Adventurous birds, and rash! ye little think
The stormy blasts of March, so nigh at hand,
Will quick arrest your hasty flight, and send
Ye disappointed back, to seek again
Your wonted, warm abodes. Thus prone is youth,
Thus easily allured to put his trust
In fair appearance, and with hope elate,
And nought suspecting, thus he sallies forth,
To buy experience in the storms of life.

But why thus chide—why not with gratitude
Receive and cherish every gleam of joy;
For many an hour can witness, that not oft
My solitude is cheered by feelings such,
So blithe, so pleasurable as thy song,
Sweet Robin, gives. Though here is seen what e'er
Of Nature's finest forms can charm the eye.
The wide extended landscape glows with more
Than common beauty. Hills on hills arise,
Majestick amphitheatre, whose lofty top,
The spreading oak and stately poplar crowns.
And ever-varied sides present such scenes
Soft or sublime as wake the poet's song—
Or art has moulded into useful forms.
Nor aught is wanting to enchant the sense,
The gifts of Ceres, or Diana's groves.
The eye enraptured roves o'er woods and lawns,
Or dwells complacent on the num'rous signs
Of cultivated life. The peasant's decent cot,
Or farmer's better mansion, mid his trees,
His fertile fields, and orchards, where his hopes,
Long held in icy bonds, shall soon expand.
His cattle, climbing heights abrupt, to seek
The welcome herb, though prematurely sprung
Through half-thawed earth; while here two ample streams
Confluent, grace and dignify the whole.

Broad o'er the plain the Susquehanna rolls,
O'er many a rocky fall, his rapid waves,
Far sounding as he comes—while Octorara's stream
Not ostentatious—like a boasting world,
Their little charities proclaiming loud,
But, through the deepened vale, retired and wild,
More silent flows, till circling yonder mead
With graceful curve, he throws his tribute in.

And is not such a scene as this the spell
That lulls the restless passions into peace?
Yes! cold must be that heart that looks unmoved
On Nature's bounties: but they cannot fill
That ardent craving in the mind of man,
For *social intercourse,* his wisest good,
Communication sweet with those we love.

CONSTANTIA.

Octorara.

The price of The Port Folio is Six Dollars per annum, to be paid in advance.

Printed and Published, for the Editor, by SMITH & MAXWELL,

NO. 28, NORTH SECOND-STREET.